Ireland's Path to Freedom.

Why Lloyd George's Proposals should be accepted.

Mr. John Redmond's Statement,

Klews of Mr. Joseph Bevlin

Letters of Priests and Daymen,

Decision of Ulster Nationalist

Ratified by Mational Directory.

People of Ireland solidly support Irish Party in standing for Sanity, Conciliation. and a Statesmanlike Solution of Irish Problem. DA 960 174 1916 11254 POLDERS Ireland's Path to Freedom.

IRISH SELF-GOVERNMENT.

AGREEMENT SOUGHT ON NATIONAL PROBLEM.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S APPEAL.

Speaking in the House of Commons on May 25th, Mr. Asquith, in the course of a statement on the Irish Situation, precipitated by the revolt in Dublin during Easter week, said—I fear that a general debate at this moment might tend to create an atmosphere unfavourable to our appeal which my colleagues and I unitedly feel it our duty to propose without any delay. I thought it my duty more than a week ago to go myself to Ireland to get what I may call a first-hand view of the whole situation. (Cheers.) I saw with my own eyes the heartrending desolation which unhappy and misguided men had wrought over a large area in the City of Dublin. I visited and talked with the utmost freedom to a large number of those who had been arrested and detained. I put myself in direct communication with all such representative exponents as I could meet of various shades and schools of thought in Ireland. I kept not only my ears and eyes ouen, but also my mind, without any sort of prepossesion or prejudice, and with only the single desire to get at the truth.

These are the two main dominant impressions that were left on my mind.

The first was a breakdown of the machinery of Irish Government.

And next the strength and depth, and, I might almost say, without exaggeration, the universality of feeling in Ireland, that we have now a unique opportunity for a new departure, for the settlement of outstanding problems, for a general and combined effort to obtain an agreement as to the way in which the Government of Ireland is for the future to be carried on.

I say, and I repeat it, that the moment is felt in Ireland to be peculiarly opportune, and one great reason which has led to that opinion is our experience in the war. Irishmen of all creeds and classes—north, south, east and west—have responded with alacrity and with self-devotion to the calls made upon them during the war. They have shed, and they are shedding to-day, their blood, giving the best of all they have, sacrificing what they prize most without stint and without reserve in the trenches and on the battlefields, which will be for ever consecrated to the memory of Ireland as of Great Britain and the Empire at large.

JOINT EFFORTS AND SACRIFICES.

Can we who represent Great Britain, can they who represent Ireland tolerate the prospect that when this war is over, and when we have by our joint efforts and sacrifices, as we hope and believe we shall, achieved our ends, Irishmen should be arrayed against one another in the most petty and the most debasing of all conflicts—an internecine domestic strife? I say to the House of Commons and to the country and to the Empire, the thought

is inconceivable. It can never be, for it would mean the bank-ruptcy not only of statesmanship, but of patriotism. In this sad hour I venture now to make an appeal to the House. The Government of Ireland Act is on the Statute Book. I did not, and no one so far as I know, and I have said so repeatedly, has ever desired to induce any coercive application by one set of Irishmen against another. What is now of paramount importance is that if it be possible—I hope it is possible—an agreement such as we sought and sought in vain before the war should be arrived at between those representing the different interests and parties in Ireland. I believe in Ireland itself there is a genuine desire to obtain such an agreement.

The Government—I speak for the whole of my colleagues, some of whom have taken the most diverse views in the past with regard to the question of Ireland—are anxious and more than anxious to do everything in their power to facilitate such a result. At the unanimous request of his colleagues, my right hon. friend on my right, the Minister of Munitions, has undertaken to devote his time and his energy and his power to the promotion of that desire.

He is already in communication with the authorised representatives and exponents of the views of different parties, and if there be, as I believe there is among Irishmen no less than among the people of Great Britain, an honest and resolute desire to take advantage of this opportunity for the attainment of that which to us, as a nation and Empire, I do not hesitate to say is the greatest boon we could possibly achieve, I cannot but hope that my right hon, friend in his mission of hope, and reconciliation, and possible unity will not only carry with him the good wishes and the ardent hopes of all members in every quarter of this House, but something more—the belief that such a result can and ought to be attained. I will venture to make an appeal to all sections of the House to abstain from any immediate discussion of the Irish situation, and from the use of any language from any quarter calculated to increase the difficulties serious, but in our hope and belief not insurmountable, to find a way to a great and lasting settlement.

MR. REDMOND.

Mr. John Redmond—The Prime Minister has made a very serious and a very solemn appeal to the House, to the effect that, even under the Consolidated Fund Bill, on which it would be possible to discuss the military affairs in Ireland, members should remain silent for the moment. This is a time when my colleagues and myself are under a very serious test. There are things going on in Ireland which we think, in ordinary circumstances, ought to be discussed at the earliest possible moment. But I regard the appeal of the Prime Minister as a test of the genuineness of our desire for a settlement now of this great problem, and for my part I could not for a moment take the responsibility for not responding to that appeal.

Further than that I will say nothing, except that if this new effort of the Government, placed as it is in such able and energetic hands, fails. and I hope and pray that it will not fail, the fault will not lie on the unreasonable action of my colleagues and myself.

MEETING OF IRISH PARTY. MR. REDMOND'S STATEMENT.

At a meeting of the Irish Parliamentary Party, held in the Mansion House, Dublin, on June 10th, 1916-Mr. John Redmond, M.P., presiding-in the course of an address to the Irish Pary the Chairman said :-

In view of the published statement of Sir Edward Carson with reference to Mr. Lloyd George's efforts to settle the Irish question, I think it right to give the Party all the information I have about the subject.

As is universally known, the Prime Minister returned from his recent visit to Ireland profoundly convinced that the system known as Castle Government had completely broken down, and he has made no attempt to set it up again by the appointment of either a Lord Lieutenant or a Chief Secretary. It is further known that the Prime Minister is convinced that the only alterative the only alterative that the only alterative the only alterative that the only alterative the only alterative that the only alterative the only alterativ native to a period of military government, coercion, and chaos is the early creation of an Irish Government.

At the first Cabinet of the Coalition Government held after the Prime Minister's return, Mr. Lloyd George was unanimously asked by all his colleagues to undertake the task of endeavouring to settle the Irish question immediately on a basis of agreement.

The Press of Great Britain of all parties, almost without exception, urged the necessity of such a settlement, and wished Mr. Lloyd George God-speed in his task.

Mr. Lloyd George has lost so time in commencing inquiries. There are one or two things which I want to make perfectly plain at the start.

There has been no conference between opposing parties. There have been no proposals made by us, or, so far as I know, by Sir Edward Carson and his friends; and it follows that there has been no agreement entered into by anyone.

Mr. Lloyd George, after seeing and consulting men of all parties in Ireland, has formulated on his own responsibility a proposal which we may fairly regard as the proposal of the Government; and neither Sir Edward Carson and his friends, nor the leaders of the Irish Party have agreed to do anything more than submit these proposals to their own supporters.

This Sir Edward Carson has already done, but, so far as I

know, no decision has yet been announced.

In a few days I hope arrangements will be completed for the holding of a conference of representatives of the Nationalists of Ulster, to which the proposal of Mr. Lloyd George will be submitted, and, in the event of the Nationalists of Ulster approving the proposal, steps will be taken to consult the Nationalists of the Southern Provinces.

In substance, Mr. Lloyd George's proposal is:-

(1.) To bring the Home Rule Act into immediate operation.
(2.) To introduce at once an Amending Bill, as a strictly War Emergency Act, to cover only the period of the war and a short specified interval after it.

(3.) During that period the Irish members to remain at Westminster in their full numbers.

- (4.) During this war emergency period Six Ulster Counties to be left as at present under the Imperial Government.
- (5.) Immediately after the war, an Imperial Conference of representatives from all the Dominions of the Empire to be held to consider the future government of the Empire, including the question of the government of Ireland.
- (6.) Immediately after this Conference, and during the interval provided for by the War Emergency Act, the permanent settlement of all the great outstanding problems, such as the permanent position of the six exempted counties, the question of finance and other problems which cannot be dealt with during the war, would be proceeded with.

I do not ask any decision by the Party at this moment, but I am anxious to give you this information so that you may be in a position to give these matters that full and careful consideration which they demand. Later on, of course, a full opportunity will be afforded the Party to deal with the whole question.

THE FATEFUL DECISION. WHAT WOULD PARNELL DO?

To the Editor of the "Freeman's Journal."

Dear Sir—People are asking what would Parnell do in the present crisis? What did he do at the time of the so-called "Kilmainham Treaty" for which he was so severely criticised by the cranks and croakers of the time? He secured substantial benefits for the farmers of Ireland, liberated the suspects, and sent "Buckshot" out of Ireland. How did Thiers act in France after the war of 1870? If he could not free all France from the Germans at the time, he hastened to free as much of the sacred soil as was then possible. Italy is a united nation. Yet the old provinces of Savoy and Trentine are unredeemed. But history tells us that nothing can stop the progress of a Nation. At the commencement of Land Purchase many people objected to its slow progress. Nevertheless, once put in operation the freedom of the soil from landlerd domination was inevitable. Does not the same hold for the unredeemed counties of Ulster? We love them as passionately, are as proud of them, and are as determined to have them in a united Ireland as the French and Italians are to have back their own separated brethren. But we are in a much more favourable position to redeem the worthy descendants of O'Neill and O'Donnell if we avail ourselves of the unique opportunity placed by Providence in our hands. What would Parnell do? He would act as Thiers and the Italian statesmen acted—secure the first spoils of victory and thereby make the final victory more complete. The temporary separation and final reunion of Greece and Crete is another case in point.

MR. JOSEPH DEVLIN, MP., addressed the following Letter to the "Irish Independent."

To the Editor.

Sir,—In your imaginary report of the proceedings in St. Mary's Hall, Belfast, on Sunday last, you grossly misrepresented my speech to the Conference, and therefore, I claim the right to place a genuine version of my views before your readers.

In my judgment, there never was a time when the need for clear thinking and plain speaking was more exigent, and never was there a time when so many attempts were made to confuse the issues on which the Irish people are called upon to arrive at a decision fraught with consequences of immeasurable good or untold disaster.

BASIC FACTS.

The authors of many of the protests that have been made seem to have lost all sense of the realities of a situation which, in its essence, is exceedingly simple, and betray an utter lack of knowledge of the basic facts that are contained in Lloyd-George's suggestions for the immediate inauguration of Home Rule for four-fifths of Ireland—suggestions, which, in my opinion, would inevitably lead to the unity of the whole country under a Parliament in College Green. There is no question of excluding Ulster or any part of Ulster from Home Rule; there is no idea of any partition; there is not a particle of foundation for the assertion that six counties, or any fraction of Ulster, is to be placed under Sir Edward Carson's Provisional Government. All these suggestions are the invention of the enemy. They are devised for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of the Irish people, and in that purblind state, of leading them on the path of national perdition.

Resolutions denouncing something that no one suggests, and protesting against something that no one proposes, might be dismissed with contempt were it not that, with malicious ingenuity, they are being twisted into a semblance of condemnation of the proposals now before the country to place the greater part of Ireland immediately under the control of an Irish Parliament, and to simplify the question of dealing with what is known as the Ulster problem, which would thus be reduced to much slenderer proportions.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S PROPOSALS.

The proposals which, at Mr. Llovd George's suggestion, the leaders of the Irish Party and of the Illster Unionist Party agreed to lay before their respective adherents have been succinctly set forth in the statement made by Mr. Redmond at the meeting of the Irish Party in the Mansion House. In view of the campaign of deliberate misrepresentation that is being carried on, these proposals cannot be too frequently restated. They are:—

(1) To bring the Home Rule Act into immediate operation.

- (2) To introduce at once an Amending Bill, as a strictly war emergency Act, to cover only the period of the war and a short specified interval after it.
- (3) During that period the Irish Members to remain at Westminster in their full numbers.
- (4) During the war emergency period six Ulster Counties to be left as at present under the Imperial Government,
- (5) Immediately after the war, an Imperial Conference of representatives from all the Dominions of the Empire to be held to consider the future government of the Empire, including the question of the government of Ireland.
- (6) Immediately after this Conference, and during the interval provided for by the war emergency Act, the permanent settlement of all the great outstanding problems, such as the permanent position of the six exempted counties, the question of finance, and other problems which cannot be dealt with during the war would be proceeded with.

Let Irish Nationalists grasp fully all that these proposals involve. It is these proposals, and not the perversions and contortions of them, that Irishmen have to consider. All the wild, whirling, hysterical outpourings of the enemies of the Irish Party and all their talk of dismemberment, of mutilation, of partition, and of separation, are merely intended to raise a cloud of irrelevant issues, and to distract attention from the proposals which Mr. Redmond submitted to the consideration of his Parliamentary colleagues, and upon which Irishmen have to come to a decision which may pave the way for a future of freedom, progress, and prosperity for Ireland, cemented by a friendly union of Orange and Green, or may lead to the destruction of all our hopes, and sacrifice the fairest prospect in all the centuries since the first English invasion.

TEMPORARY SOLUTION.

Now, in the first place, the scheme which Mr. Lloyd George has outlined is in no sense a complete settlement, but is offered as a solution of an immediate and a temporary difficulty. Mr. Asquith has stated, and all parties in both Great Britain and Ireland are agreed, that Castle rule is no longer possible. Therefore, there are only two alternatives. The people of this country must be directly associated with the government of this country or some form of government of a more or less military and coercionist character, directly antagonistic to popular opinion, must be set up. If there is a third possible alternative, no one has yet produced it. It would, no doubt, be the ideal solution if Mr. Asquith could put the Home Rule Act in immediate operation in its entirety.

SITUATION TO BE FACED.

But, then there are certain facts which must be faced, and which cannot be effaced by merely shutting our eyes to them. Ulster Unionists may be conciliated. Who says they should be coerced? Does anyone light-heartedly propose to provoke

another rebellion in the North, and, if such a rebellion were provoked, what hope would there be for many a long year of wiping out the fatal legacy it would leave behind? All Ulster, therefore, cannot be compelled against its will to come immediately under the control of a Home Rule Parliament. Is there no middle course, leading by gentle sussion, and the powerful influence of allied interests, that would bring the six counties in Ulster to follow the path that the Unionists in three Ulster counties are not unwilling to tread? Would not the immediate operation of Home Rule in twenty-six counties inevitably tend to draw the remaining six counties to seek the enormous advantages of complete identity of interest and administration with the rest The acceptance of Lloyd George's proposals by the of Ireland? Unionists would mean the end of the famous Covenant which aimed at the defeat of any attempt to set up a Home Rule Parlia-ment in Ireland. Already in the "Irish Times," Unionists in the South and West are crying out against exclusion in any shape or form. If Home Rule was put into immediate operation, would that hostility be any the less? Nay, would it not be immensely strengthened? Would not all the Unionists in Leinster, Munster and Connaught, plus all the Unionists in the three Ulster counties which had come under the Irish Parliament, three Ulster counties which had come under the Irish Parliament, be a mighty influence ever exerting its power with increasing intensity to get those who share their religious and political views in the remaining counties to join hands in an assembly in which they would exercise a great and, on many occasions, perhaps, a dominating power? In the Imperial Parliament Ulster Unionists would be an utterly hopeless and entirely negligible quantity. On the balance between Nationalist and Unionist representatives, the effectiveness of the Ulster Unionist Party at Westminster would be practically nil. On the other hand, in a native Parliament the same forces throughout the whole of Ireland would form a strong cohesive, and compelling influence Ireland would form a strong, cohesive, and compelling influence at College Green.

UNIONIST POSITION.

Self-interest would dictate to the Unionists of the six counties the advisability of joining hands with the rest of their co-religionists throughout the country. Re-union would effected under conditions that would appeal to Protestant sentiment and afford powerful safeguards for Protestant interests, whilst Nationalists would gladly welcome into the councils of the nation men representing those great industrial concerns in the North-East which are such a valuable asset, and of which all Ireland is so justly proud. Lloyd George's scheme thus puts into immediate operation forces that tend strongly to bring all Ireland into harmonious unity and co-operation. Might it not be that before the time came when the Imperial Conference would assemble immediately after the war to deal with the Ulster problem, that problem would already have largely solved itself? In what position would the six counties be if Lloyd George's proposals are adopted? In exactly the same position as the thirty-two counties will be if they are rejected, with this difference, that if a settlement falls through Ireland will be plunged into chaos; the forces of ascendancy will have the upper hand; English feeling will be antagonised, and Irish representatives in the Imperial Parliament will be forced into a position which, at a time when the whole Empire is fighting for its very existence, may be fraught with appalling disaster for the future of Ireland. There can be no standing still, and there can be no progress. Every patriotic lover of his country must look with feelings of

trepidation, almost despair, to a future in which no ray of light illumines the clouded horizon. That we should discard a great opportunity for national appearement and enfranchisement, and walk blindly along the road plainly leading to defeat and disaster seems incomprehensible.

PARTITION UNTHINKABLE.

There is not a single honest Nationalist devoted to the ideal of Ireland a Nation who would not view with abhorrence any proposal aimed at the partition of Ulster or any part of Ulster from the rest of the Fatherland. The thing is unthinkable. No one experiences the feeling of revulsion against any exclusion policy more keenly than I do myself; and it is because I have come to the strong and clear conclusion that the only way to secure real and lasting unity is on the basis of the proposals before us that I appeal to my fellow-countrymen, particularly of my cwn Province, to give a careful consideration to these proposals, and to realise the immensity of the issues involved in any rash or hasty rejection.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE RECENT REVOLT,

Irishmen to-day are seething in revolt against the military despotism, whose excesses have shocked and estranged public opinion throughout the world. Many of the leaders of the Insurrectionary Movement have been executed; nothing can undo their fate. But there are many others, both leaders and rank and file, condemned to long and weary years of imprisonment and penal servitude. Have we no care for these victims of a militarism Hun-like in its severity? Any settlement of the Irish Problem must involve an amnesty for these men. We cannot accept freedom while the victims of martial law remain in British dungeons. We have an opportunity to open the prison doors to these men, to welcome them back into a new Ireland, which has broken with an evil past, and has seen the last of revolutionary outbursts and repressive savagery. If no settlement is come to, feeling in Ireland must inevitably become more inflamed. What prospect will there be under such circumstances of the release of the brave but misguided youths who risked their lives in what they believed was Ireland's cause? Let us give something more valuable than lip sympathy to the men who are now suffering because they foolishly thought that Ireland's only way to freedom was through the arbitrament of the sword.

IF PROPOSALS REJECTED?

If the proposals now before the country are rejected, the Unionists of Ulster will set themselves, steadily and determinedly, to reorganise their forces against any scheme of Home Rule. They will no longer be committed to acceptance of the principle of Self-Government. They will have been immensely strengthened by the suicidal folly of the Nationalists in sacrificing the position of impregnable strength which a National Government, holding supreme authority over twenty-six counties, would confer. They will be able to apply themselves to the work of building up the industrial and commercial prosperity of North-East Ulster and of increasing the political power in that portion of Ireland where they have been strengthening their position of recent years. Mr. Vesey Knox has pointed out that "for fifty years North-East Ulster has

been becoming steadily more Protestant and less Irish." Are we to accelerate the process? And if, as some of the apostles of pessimism say, "Better wait for another fifty years," until Ulster has become almost completely Anglicised and the Catholic Celtic section have grown correspondingly weak and impotent, what likelihood will there be then of bringing about the reunion of North and South that is now within our grasp? Meanwhile the rest of Ireland will be dissipating its energies, not in the great and beneficent work of building up a prosperous and self-governed nation, but in the difficult and possibly fruitless task of trying to get back the golden opportunity that we are asked to-day so recklessly to fling aside.

IRISH LEADER MISREPRESENTED.

In the resolution passed by the Ulster Unionist Council, reference was made to a "definite" exclusion of six Ulster counties. Immediately the opponents of Home Rule seized upon this ambiguous adjective and interpreted it as meaning "permanent." As might be expected, the nation was told that Mr. John Redmond has misrepresented Lloyd George's proposals, and Irishmen were asked to discredit and disbelieve the explicit statement of the Irish Leader. The precipitate rush to declare that Mr. Redmond was unworthy of credence is but an illustration of the whole spirit of reckless desperation with which the apostles of dissension are bent upon the work of National destruction. By a happy chance the speech of the Prime Minister at Ladybank has come just at the appropriate moment to nail this deliberate lie; but it is by lies like that the mind of Ireland is being poisoned, and that well-intentioned but ill-informed persons and public boards are being stampeded into condemnation of supposed schemes which have no more relation to Mr. Lloyd George's proposals for immediate Home Rule than Tenterden Steeple to the Goodwin Sands. "What is desired now," said Mr. Asquith, "is provisional settlement. When the war comes to an end, when the reign of peace is re-established, we shall have to take stock as an Empire of our internal relations as an Empire. . The fabric of Empire will have to be refashioned, and the relations not only between Great Britain and Ireland but between the United Kingdom and our Dominions will of necessity be brought, and brought promptly, under close and connected review.'

IRELAND'S CHOICE.

Will it be better for Ireland to go into this conference with Home Rule in operation for twenty-six counties with the consent of the Ulster Unionists, with a new spirit of conciliation and cooperation growing up between the North and South, with an Irish Parliament giving to our Unionist fellow-countrymen an object lesson in the marvellous opportunities for national development and progress that such an Assembly affords; or will it be to our advantage as Irish Nationalists to come before that Conference with our people in sullen revolt, the country honeycombed with anti-constitutional societies, and poisoned by a campaign of disruption and dissension, with all the healing influences of nearly forty years of a most successful constitutional movement, smashed and discredited, with racial passions aroused, in their most appalling intensity, and all the forces that have fought for Irish freedom amongst the English democracy disillusioned, embittered, and antagonised by the fatal consequences of a rash and suicidal rejection of the greatest chance that has ever been offered to our people to win not only the freedom of their native land, but the friendly co-operation of our Unionist fellow-countrymen in building up a self-governed, a prosperous, and above all, a united Irish nation? That is the issue the delegates to the forthcoming Ulster Conference will have to face. Let there be no misconception. There is no third alternative. The English people will give us anything that we can agree among ourselves to accept; but they will not shoot down Ulster Unionists at the behest of those who reject the olive branch now offered. The whole fate of Ireland is in the melting pot. It is for ourselves to make or mar the nation's future.

As I have pointed out, the extension of Home Rule to the six counties is not defeated, but merely delayed. The Nationalists in these counties will still have the full strength of the entire Nationalist representation of all Ireland to protect their interests, and there is the additional safeguard that, until their future is definitely settled, no contentious legislation affecting them can be passed through the Imperial Parliament. It is not pleasant for them to be asked to wait for a little while longer, but will their position be made pleasanter by having Home Rule denied to the rest of Ireland in the meantime, and increased strength thus given to the forces fighting against Irish freedom? The dog in the manger policy is not one, I fancy, that would appeal to any section of Uster Nationalists.

EFFECT OF LLOYD GEORGE'S SCHEME.

What the Ulster Unionists have been asking is to be allowed to remain under the Imperial Parliament. No one knows better than the Unionists of the North-East of Ulster that such a claim is only part of the game of political tactics. They realise fully the appalling cost and the abnormal delays that any project involving any legislation at Westminster entails. How would it be under Lloyd George's scheme? Whilst twenty-six counties would be able immediately to deal with their local wants in an assembly where Irish needs are the supreme consideration, the other six counties would be feebly trying to make their voices heard amidst the welter of conflicting and complex interests of a world-wide Empire. North-East Ulster would have to go to the Imperial Parliament for leave to carry out the simplest measure of social reform or industrial What chance would the representatives of Northdevelopment. East Ulster have of getting their wants attended to in such a legislative assembly? They would simply be swamped. Whatever their failings or prejudices, the people of North-East Ulster have never lacked a keen appreciation of business needs. Does anyone think they would not soon feel the pressure of an impossible position driving them into an Irish Parliament where their local wants would find prompt attention at a cost infinitesimally smaller than would be wasted in a futile effort in a Parliament now more than ever devoted to the needs of an expanding Empire? It is not merely that Lloyd George's proposals open the way to a united Ireland; they make a united Ireland, under a native Parliament, an absolute necessity to the Orangemen of the North in quite as imperative a degree as to the Nationalists of the South. Can any sane Nationalist, then, hesitate as to how he should act in this-great crisis? We have been given a great opportunity.

RESPONSIBILITY OF REJECTING PROPOSALS.

Let us not incur a terrible responsibility by lightly rejecting the proposal which brings the freedom and amicable unity of all the proposal which brings the freedom and anickation and virus. Ireland immediately into view. The enemies of Home Rule are right from their point of view in calling on Nationalists to reject the present offer. The putting of Home Rule into immediate operation in twenty-six counties would be the putting into operation of powerful and irresistible influences, tending steadily and with cumulative effect to draw all Ulster of its own accord to seek the protection and fostering care of a native Parliament. That is an ideal which appeals to the Orangeman as well as to the Nationalist. It is the goal towards which every patriotic Irishman should anxiously strive. Sir Edward Carson, on a notable occasion in the House of Commons, foreshadowed the prospect of a Home Rule Parliament winning the confidence of the Ulster Unionists. and thus bringing about what we all desire, an Ireland, one and undivided, under a native Legislature. Here are his words:-"1 will say this that if Home Rule is passed, much as I detest it, and loyally as I will accept the responsibility for opposing it, my earnest hope, and I would say my most earnest prayer, would be that the Government of Ireland for the South and West should prove such a success in the future, notwithstanding all our anticipations, that it might be best for the interests of Ulster itself to move towards that Government, and come in with and form one unit in relation to Ireland. I would be glad to see such a state of affairs arising in Ireland that you would find such mutual confidence and goodwill between all classes in Ireland as would lead to a stronger Ireland as an integral unit in a federal system.'

THE NATION'S TIDE.

There is a tide in the affairs of nations as of individuals. If we fail to take it at the flood, then, indeed, the future of the nation's life may be "bound in shallows and in miseries." The forthcoming Ulster Conference should be a deliberative assembly whose decision should be the result not of preliminary mandates, but of unfettered discussion of all the facts.

No delegate should go to that conference determined to shut his ears to the voice of reason, and blind his eyes to obvious facts, or with his mind made up not to listen to argument. The delegates should not go as gramophones incapable of more than the reproduction of catch cries and shibboleths. Theirs is a weightier responsibility, a responsibility which may be betrayed but cannot be evaded. Ireland is being given a great chance. May God guide her sons to arrive at a wise decision which shall bring immediate benefit to cur Fatherland, and open the way to a glorious and early future in which all its children shall rejoice in their new-found freedom and fraternity. Let us not add another to what the Prime Minister has described as the "tragic series of missed and misused opportunities."

Your obedient servant.

JOSEPH DEVLIN.

3 College Square North, Belfast, June 20th, 1916.

VERY REV. CANON QUINN, P.P.

To the Editor of the "Freeman's Journal."

Dear Sir,—Before we had notice of the forthcoming Ulster Conference the devotions of the Forty Hours had been announced to begin in this parish on Friday morning next. None of the priests of this parish can therefore be present at the Nationalist Ulster Conference.

Since I cannot be present I may be permitted to say to all those who take an interest in the business of the Conference what I would do if I were present.

I would speak and vote for bringing into immediate operation the Home Rule Act of 1914. I should reluctantly consent to the temporary exclusion of the six Ulster counties—but I would consent in the circumstances of the emergency.

My reasons are:-

- (1.) Twenty-six counties of Nationalist Ireland shall immediately have the full benefits of the Home Rule Act. The first effect of this would be national peace, and the end of martial law here and now.
- (2.) The exclusion scheme is only temporary, and during its existence the six counties must enjoy the same rights and priviliges they have at present. Eighty Irish Nationalist members will safeguard these rights in the British House of Commons, and members with less worthy motives can do little harm. Those Unionists who were taught that Home Rule was a demoralisation would soon come to see that they were fed on husks. The conversion of these and the Home Rule Parliament won't be long delayed; and the Dublin Parliament House should be designed on a large scale, else it must soon be enlarged to hold them.
- (3.) If there is any considerable majority of the Ulster Conference against the temporary exclusion of the six counties—which may kind Providence prevent—every lover of Ireland should be sorry, because Carsonism will then have the upper hand. There will be riotous festivity in the Orange Lodges.

But worse may happen. The National organisation may go to pieces, because the present great uncompromising and unselfish Irish Leaders, John Redmond, John Dillon, and Joseph Devlin—the zealous and heroic man of the North—may stand aside in despair.

Let us hope there will be no hasty, ill-considered resolutions at the coming Conference.—Yours sincerely,

JOHN (CANON) QUINN, P.P.

Magherafelt, June 20th, 1916.

REV. FATHER LAWLESS, P.P.

Rev. Father Lawless, P.P., presiding at a meeting of North Louth Executive U.I.L., asked who were the gentlemen who were so strongly against the proposals and who were raising such an immense cloud of dust that no person could see any point clearly? Was the "Independent" ever right? Looking over the list of those in attendance at some of the meetings in the North he was struck by the very large number of the gentlemen there who had never subscribed to the National Fund, who had never taken part in the Home Rule fight, and many of whom were absolutely against Home Rule. These were the gentlemen who were trying to lead the country on false issues, because at the Omagh meeting the resolutions were carried on lying pretences. The people who were shouting so loudly wanted the representatives of the country to be pledged against the proposals before these proposals were examined or considered. "It struck me," said Father Lawless, "that instead of being Irishmen they are a collection of interned aliens who came over to this country to seize it for the Germans.' (Laughter.) Many of these people were against the proposals, not because they want Home Rule for twenty-six counties, but because they don't want Home Rule at all. The scheme meant that the parties of England admitted the principle of Home Rule, and those people in the North were dead against that. They had a second object—to smash the National Party and to once again leave Ireland like a corpse on the dissecting table. As a priest he believed that in the interests of the Church a madder thing could not be done than to oppose this settlement. Religion should not on any account be allowed to be responsible for the break up of the settlement. No people in the Three Kingdoms had so much to fear by the break up of the settlement as the priests, because if the proposals were rejected on religious grounds the Church would be made odious in England and all the British Colonies, and the priests would be described as the most unreasoning and unreasonable body of men in the world. It was ridiculous to say that America was bringing any pressure to bear on the English Government. It was the Colonial Ministers who were forcing on this settlement, and they were most anxious to have a sensible agreement of the country for the first settlement. four-fifths of the country, for the first time in 700 years, ruled by Irishmen? England had done wonders by ruling a county and a half in the Pale. What could Ireland not do with four-fifths of the entire nation ruled by her sons? (Applause.) An important point to remember in the present crisis was that the whole Tory Party in England, which for twenty years had strenuously sup-ported the Ulster Orangemen, had admitted the principle of Home Rule if Ulster would agree to it.

THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE.

How would Ulster stand at the great Imperial Conference when she was told by the English Tory Party that they were agreeable to Home Rule, and when the Colonial Ministers would look in amazement on a quarter of a country proposing to cut itself off from the rest? He was proud to see so many of the heads of the Church in Ireland coming out with the people and talking

sense. The Dean of Clogher (Canon O'Connor) and Canon Murphy, of Kilkenny, were men whom nobody might be afraid to follow, and the priests in Belfast who had led the conference had done a good work for the country. If for no other reason he (Father Lawless) would support Mr. Redmond, because they were told that "Blessed are the peacemakers." (Applause.)

ULSTER PRIEST.

ENCOURAGING MESSAGE TO MR. DEVLIN.

Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P., received the following letter from the respected Parish Priest of Portaferry, County Down:

Portaferry, 21st June, 1916.

My Dear Mr. Devlin,-I have received a ticket of admission to the Conference to be held in St. Mary's Hall on Friday. am sorry, owing to a rheumatic attack, I cannot hope to be present, and, lest my absence might be misunderstood, I think it right to express to you my view of the proposals to be discussed at the Conference. Passing over a rehearsal of the proposals so familiar to you, I would vote that the Nationalists of the six proposed to be excluded counties should assent to provisional and temporary exclusion, and put no obstacle to the acceptance of Home Rule for the other twenty-six counties. Should I vote otherwise I would consider myself either ignorantly blind or traitorous to the best interests of Ireland. Much as I dislike even the temporary exclusion of our six Northern counties, I am firmly convinced that the adoption of the proposals would ulti-mately and in a short time result in Ireland united under a Home Rule Government. To reject the proposals would play into the hands of the opponents of Home Rule for Ireland or any part of Ireland. From the twenty-sixth rung of the political ladder the Home Rule flag will, I hope, wave triumphantly in College Green. It will be an ensign to the world of peace and prosperity. May wisdom, good sense, and good temper guide your deliberations on Friday, and I venture to say the result will be in accordance with the sentiments expressed in your beautiful letter in to-day's "Irish News."—With kindest regards, I am, my dear Mr. Devlin, yours very sincerely,

J. KENNEDY, P.P., V.F.

A VETERAN ULSTER P.P.

To the Editor of the "Irish News."

Dear Sir,—As I cannot be present at the Conference to-morrow, I desire, with the strongest emphasis, to endorse the policy of the Irish Party in accepting the Lloyd Georgian proposals as a basis of settlement of the Irish question.

As one who lives in the very heart of one of the most Unionist districts in the North-East Corner, I consider it would be sheer madness to adopt any other course.—I remain, yours very sincerely,

B. FALLOONA, P.P., V.F.

Parochial House, Larne, Co. Antrim, 22nd June, 1916.

QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED.

To the Editor of the "Freeman's Journal,"

Sir,—The practical question for Ireland to consider at the present moment is whether the position in which the country will be placed by accepting the Home Rule offer is better or worse than the position in which it would be placed by rejecting it.

It is not whether Ireland is better off now than it would be if Home Rule for twenty-six counties were in operation. It is not a question as to whether Ireland was better off a year ago or five years ago than she will be after accepting the proposed arrangement. We cannot go back to any past condition, and we cannot stay in the present condition. The internal state of feeling in Ireland, the attitude of public feeling in England, and the consequent attitude of the English Government towards Ireland, have been profoundly changed by recent events. Most important of all perhaps is the change that has taken place in the amount of sympathy that has been aroused for Ireland in neutral countries, especially in the United States.

All these conditions are liable to be again profoundly changed the moment that Ireland's decision becomes known. The state of feeling in Ireland itself will be affected by it, the attitude of England towards Ireland will be profoundly affected by it, and perhaps most of all the opinion of neutral countries will be affected by it.

We are now in the limelight. We occupy a central position in the world's stage. We shall not be able to hold that place for very long. The world is too busy to occupy itself very long with a small country even though it happen to be such an interesting one as Ireland. As soon as we have announced our decision the world will in a short time be so busy with other things that it will have ceased to bother itself with Ireland.

It is not enough that the decision we come to be right. It is perhaps more vital in our case that it be recognised as right by our friends throughout the world. All the Powers engaged in the war were most anxious to seem right in the eyes of neutral countries. The Central Powers did their best to throw all the blame on the Allies and the Allies did their best to saddle the responsibility upon the Central Powers.

It is infinitely more important for us that we should carry with us the approval of public opinion throughout the world. Even though the opinion of the world goes against any of the Great Powers, it still has its army and navy to fall back upon. If we lose the sympathy of the world we have nothing to fall back upon.

If we reject Home Rule rather than agree to the exclusion of the Unionist parts of Ulster, what case have we to put before the world? We can point out that Ireland is an island with a definite geographical boundary. That argument might be all right if we were appealing to a number of island nationalities that had themselves definite geographical boundaries. Appealing as we are to Continental nations with shifting boundaries, that argument will have no force whatever. National and geographical boundaries scarcely ever ccincide. Geography would make one nation of Spain and Portugal; history has made two of them. Geography did its best to make one nation of Norway and Sweden; history has succeeded in making two of them. Geography has scarcely anything to say to the rumber of nations upon the North American Continent; history has done the whole thing. If a man were to try to construct a political map of Europe out of its physical map he would find himself groping in the dark. Geography has worked against it. The island of Ireland and the national unit of Ireland simply do not coincide. In the last analysis the test of separate nationality is the wish of the people. A man who settles in America becomes an American by transferring his love and allegiance to the United States. The Unionists of Ulster have never transferred their love and allegiance to Ireland. They may be Irelanders, using Ireland as a geographical term, but they are not Irishmen in the national sense. They love the hills of Antrim in the same way as we love the plains of Roscommon, but the centre of their natriotic enthusiasm is London, whereas the centre of ours is Dublin.

We claim the right to decide what is to be our nation. We refuse them the same right. We are putting ourselves before the whole world in the same light as the man in the Gospel who was forgiven the ten thousand talents, and who proceeded immediately to throttle his neighbour for a hundred pence. After three hundred years England has begun to despair of being able to compel us to love her by force. And so we are anxious to start where England left off, and we are going to compel Antrim and Down to love us by force.

I know exactly how the Yankee will take it. He will say: "I guess you people over there in Ireland want to run your own little affairs in your own way. By all means you should have it. It is a shame that you should be held down so long by brute force. And these men up there in Belfast, they want things in a different way: let them have it too." That will settle the whole case, and the Yankee will forthwith proceed to think of something else. We

shall, of course, retain the support of our own old reliable following in the United States, no matter what decision we may take. But we must remember that they are only a fraction, even of the men of our own blood.

It would not be safe to build very much upon the depth of England's desire to settle the Irish question. What England wants to do is to get rid, as far as possible, of the bad taste left in the world's mouth by her recent samples of militarism in Ireland. She can do that in one of two ways: either by making a settlement that will look satisfactory in the United States, or by making us a plausible offer and then throwing the blame upon us for rejecting it.

What then is the choice that lies before us? How shall things be in Ireland in two or three months' time? We shall have either a Home Rule Parliament experimenting upon twenty-six counties, and the other six as they were, with the neutral world taking a mild and sympathetic interest in the doings of the baby government which its influence helped to call into being, and anxious to see it get a chance to grow. Or we shall have the whole thirty-two counties under a new and slightly improved form of friendly Birrelism, with the neutral world turned away from us in disgust as an impracticable and impossible race.

There will not be much occasion for lighting bonfires in either case, but at least there ought be no difficulty in deciding which to choose

And then we must not forget the men who are pining in English prisons. Alas that so many are gone beyond the reach of all but our prayers.—Yours, etc.,

MICHAEL O'FLANAGAN.

Coosna, Boyle, 19th June, 1916.

"The Leader" (Dublin) adverting to Father O'Flanagan's letter in its issue of July 8, says:—

America and the neutral countries in view of the peace conferences and the claim that England is fighting for the rights of small nationalities is the great argument with all of us—we all, whether agreeable to deal on Lloyd George conditions for immediate temporary settlement or determined not to give a perch of Irish soil for a second, are on common ground here. Now what of American opinion in relation to this matter? One of the best letters—we think it was the best—written during this controversy appeared in the "Freeman" from Father Michael O'Flanagan. Father O'Flanagan has been recently a valued and frequent contributor to the "Leader" and to other papers: he has been to America: he is a well-known Irish Irelander and Gaelic Leaguer, and he is nothing if not a fighter. He argued vigorously for a deal on the Lloyd George suggestion. He knows America well and he knows his own mind too.

"THE MEASURE OF OUR POSSIBILITIES." LETTER FROM COLONEL MOORE.

To the Editor "Freeman's Journal."

Buswell's Hotel, Dublin, June 12th, 1916.

Sir,—On Saturday night I was informed by a Stop Press Edition that the Irish Party, at a special meeting, had come to an important and unanimous decision regarding the Home Rule proposals, which would be communicated on Monday morning. I felt that the fate of Ireland had been decided, and wondered why Sunday should so unfortunately intervene to baulk my curiosity. Last night anxiety kept me awake, and I arose nearly half an hour earlier than usual to hear the news. I find that the Party had unanimously decided it was unable to make up its mind to come to any decision, and that it merely shifted the responsibility to irresponsible newspapers and letter-writers like myself.

sibility to irresponsible newspapers and letter-writers like myself.

Well, we must face the danger and difficulty, and I think that the men of Ireland have the courage to do it. There are plenty of men of action among the Volunteers whose minds are not wasted away by the Asquithian philosophy of "wait and see." I am going to appeal to the young men of Ireland to make up their minds now that the real proposals have been placed before them. The crisis is grave, and the future history of our

country depends on our decision.

It is one hundred and sixteen years since the Union was forced on Ireland, and during all that time we have been engaged in a series of struggles to extricate ourselves from its toils. Emmet, O'Connell, the men of '48, the Tenant Leaguers, the Fenians, the Home Rulers, the Farnellites, the Sinn Feiners have each in their turn made their efforts. Some of them have been successful in social movements, but, curiously enough, sometimes through the incompetence of leaders, sometimes through the impatience or inertness of their followers, the edifice of national self-government that each has built up has always crumbled into dust before it could be completed. Worse than that, each effort has been succeeded by a period of decay, during which all except a few have sunk into despair.

Let us consider, if by any chance we are near another National misfortune, and if it would not be well to strengthen our position, and gain a foothold for a future offensive. Let us take counsel from the past, and let us examine for a moment how some of the great social reforms in Ireland have been effected.

In 1850 the Tenant League was formed, and within two years it had attained such formidable dimensions both in Parliament and the country that after several Cabinets had been overthrown a settlement was attempted. The movement broke down at the moment of success, through a betrayal of the leaders, and could not be renewed for nearly twenty years. I remember the criticisms that were then passed on the Land Bill of 1870. I remember hearing that it was worthless, that it would make the position of the tenants worse; but wiser men pointed out some real advantages. I was very young, but I recall a conversation

and hearing my father say "Agitation in Ireland is spasmodic, not continuous; we must be careful to secure some definite success before the spasm is exhausted; this Bill will be the basis of future developments." This was my first political lesson; and how true it was will be recognised by those who remember the Bill of 1881 and its successors, until the tenants have become owners of their own land. The argument that impressed the English people was that they had admitted the principle and must not stop till it had been brought to a conclusion.

On the other hand, I recall the History of the Catholic University. After many years of agitation a Bill was introduced by Mr.Gladstone in 1874 establishing a Catholic College, to be incorporated in Dublin University, on terms practically coequal with Trinity. There were a few objectionable provisions which could have been rectified in time, but at the instance of the Catholic Bishops the scheme was rejected by the Irish members, and Mr. Gladstone was turned out of office.

For thirty years every Government, Liberal or Tory, refused to interfere with Trinity's monopoly, and when at last the National University was established it was not on a purely Catholic basis; the Bishops never again got the opportunity they had lost.

I am addressing this letter to the young men of Ireland, the history of the last fifty years is more familiar to me than to them, and now I want them to consider very carefully the grave peril in which we are placed; I want to warn them not to permit themselves to be rushed into a step they will live to regret by fine phrases and bold flourishes. Ireland has been cursed by big talk, fine writing, and mighty aspirations. Let us review the situation like sensible men, and consider, not the full measure of our desires, but the measure of our possibilities. Every Nationalist wants a free and united Ireland, but is there anyone, even amongst those who are shouting so loudly, who is prepared to march an army to Antrim to enforce it on recalcitrant Orangemen? I do not believe that we shall ever get a united Ireland if our first act of freedom is to coerce our Northern fellow-countrymen. Even if we could do so, I would be no party to coercing any county, the majority of whose people objected to be governed by a Parliament in Dublin. North-East Ulster would be to Ireland what Ireland has been to England during the last hundred years, a bugbear and an encumbrance. These counties will come in if we are wise, because exclusion will be commercial ruin.

The next thing we have to consider is the exclusion of Tyrone and Fermanagh: it is both unfair and unreasonable and, when I first heard of it, I scouted it as impossible. But when the proposal is put forward as a matter of temporary expediency, to be reconsidered at the end of the war by a Committee, of which the three Colonial Premiers are to be members, it assumes a totally different aspect. By that time every influence will bear to bring them in. The natural rights of majorities will demonstrate its reasonableness; the demand of the new Parliament, backed by the full Nationalist vote of eighty members at Westminster, will make it imperative. I am confident, that the people of the other four counties finding commercial exclusion disastrous, will come in as a rearguard to reinforce their co-religionists in the South. An Irish Parliament, once established in Dublin, will remain as a rock on which to build the whole national structure; if we reject it, who knows what will happen? Home Rule may suffer the fate of the Catholic University, and remain untouched for thirty years.

English opinion is now pliant on account of the war, because it is necessary to get munitions from America and recruits from Canada and Australia. Once the war is over, a different mood may come over the Anglo-Saxon mind.

The struggle for national self-government has continued during my whole life and the lives of my father and grandfather. I want to see even a beginning before I die; I do not want to transmit a hopeless struggle to a new generation.

A meeting of the National Committee has been summoned, and we intend to hold a Convention of the Irish National Volunteers, to consider what is to be the fate of Ireland. Before it assembles we shall know more fully the demands of Ulster, and if any other and better proposal is put forward, as I hope and expect, we shall be ready to consider it.—I remain, yours truly,

MAURICE MOORE.

LETTER FROM SIR HENRY BELLINGHAM,

To he Editor of the "Freeman's Journal."

Castlebellingham, Co. Louth, Ireland, 20th June, 1916.

Sir,—The recent insurrection in Dublin having caused a British Prime Minister, and others in high positions, to declare that the machinery of Irish Government had finally broken down, makes it evident that the present is a very critical time for our country, and one in which everyone should do his best to smooth down animosities and work for the common weal. These who know Ireland better than most English statesmen have long ago felt the unsatisfactory system of Castle Government inaugurated sin to the Union, and sought by means of Home Rule to rectify its defects and give to the Irish public the means of self-legislation. I may, perhaps, be allowed, not only as one who has deeply at heart the welfare of his country, but as one who has for the past forty years been associated with schemes for improving Irish industries and bettering the condition of our people, and who has always been in sympathy with Irish Nationalism and Home Rule, to make a few remarks on the present very critical political situation. In doing so I wish to cast no aspersion on those with whom I disagree, or question the sincerity of their views.

Believing as I do, and as I always have done, that Irish people are the best judges of, and capable of managing, their own affairs, and that Irish and English politics are not only not the same, but totally different, I have always regarded the policy of self-government for Ireland as essentially the true Conservative policy, not only for Ireland, but even for England, for it must obviously be more advantageous for England to have a prosperous and contented country by her side than a discontented one. It must also obviously be better for Ireland to have self-government and responsibility than to be bandied about as she has been since the

Union in 1800 between English political parties, whether they call themselves Radical or Conservative, Liberal or Unionist, who know, as a rule, nothing about this country, and care less, and whose one idea has been to make political capital for their own respective factions The British Radical Party, for instance, took up Home Rule four or five years ago, not because they considered it really good for Ireland, but because their opponents under a Unionist Administration had repudiated it, and pretended it meant separation and the break-up of the Empire. What is the position to-day? A large proportion of the British public seem longing tosettle this eternal Irish question, and yet fail to grasp the fact that it must and can only be settled by Irishmen themselves, and that it by no means follows that what Englishmen consider good for this country is in reality either desirable or beneficial. We have only to lock at our National System of Education to realise this—a system in theory, undenominationl, because an English Government would have it so, but in practice denominational because the bulk of the Irish people, both Catholic and Protestant, would have the contrary. Surely it is a time, if ever, for our people to stick together, to cease those eternal quarrels and jealousies, and show that we are more likely, by united action amongst ourselves, to effect what is wanted, than by pushing matters to extremes. Our people should remember that constitutional action, as carried out by the Irish Parliamentary Party, under leaders like Mr. Redmond, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. Devlin, has already achieved victory in having a Home Rule Act placed on the Statute Book, and that it is a mere question of time for it to be carried into operation. In any case constitutional action has practically beaten the British Government on its own grounds, whereas physical force has always had the result of making the British public more prejudiced than ever against Irishmen, and even if successful now would only leave Ireland at the mercy of another nation more despotic and more anti-Catholic and anti-Irish than Great Britain.

Prussia is the ruling spirit among the Germans, and the way Prussia has treated Poland is brutal in the extreme. I have never been an admirer of that type of English rule which is based upon ascendancy principles, but when it is a question of English or Prussian rule I should have no hesitation, especially since recent years have shown clearly how large a proportion of people in Great Britain deplore the policy they formerly carried out in Ireland, and have striven by legislation to make amends for the past.

No one, Home Ruler or Unionist in 1916, likes the idea of the partition of Ireland any more than in 1914. Part of Ulster had, however, made it clear in 1914 that no safeguards or offers of Home Rule within Home Rule would reconcile it, and that it could be made applicable to all Ireland only by force. Now, apart from the question whether it was practicable to apply the force required, apart from the reluctance with which all good Irishmen would contemplate the coercion of their fellow-countrymen by the British army, even if it could be successfully accomplished, all sensible men realis; that force is no remedy, and that to inaugurate a Bill for the better Government of Ireland by the dragooning of an important section of Irishmen would be the way to ruin the prospects of a new regime. Accordingly it became quite clear twoyears ago that the Bill would be coupled with an offer of exclusion for the disaffected area. When, after the outbreak of the war, the

Bill was placed on the Statute Book, it had to be coupled with a Suspensory Act, the one only object of which was to ensure that Home Rule should not become operative until Ulster had been given a right of exclusion at least as ample as would have been given in the autumn of 1914 if the war had not intervened. The proposals now under consideration (except possibly as regards the actual area) seem merely the putting into operation now, instead of at the end of the war, of the understanding which was admittedly the only alternative to the abandonment of Home Rule, or the crushing of North-East Ulster by armed force. What has happened to make Home Rule for all Ireland, which was impracticable in 1914, practicable in 1916 (as apparently many think), or to make the compromise inevitable in 1914, attributable in 1916 only to the incapacity or treachery of the Irish Party as some enemies of the Irish Party seem to think? No Nationalist has as yet explained this. It is, of course, obvious why Unionists, whose party, politics, or creed and religious prejudice triumph over the wider patriotism, should desire the rejection by Nationalist Ireland of the present proposals, for that would postpone, if not destroy, the realisation of what they have systematically fought against. But why should Irish Nationalists reject these proposals? What is the alternative? The preservation of the status quo till the end of the war. If all goes well in the interval, what can they hope for more than the present proposals? Will the coercion of Ulster be the more practicable or inviting? Will the insistency by Ulster on exclusion, as the price of Home Rule, be then less than in 1914, or than at present? It is true, indeed, that some optimists anticipated that the knowledge Unionists and Nationalists are gaining of each other on many a hard-fought battlefield abroad, would make possible after the war some scheme of Home Rule that would avoid the partition of Ireland. Many of us, however, believed that the real effect would tend to the establishment of a mutual respect that would make the severance involved in partition less bitter, and pave the way to a reunion after some experience had been gained of what Home Rulers believe would be the beneficent effects of Home Rule. Bethat as it may, those prospects have been disastrously affected by the Sinn Fein risings, and few can doubt that now, or after the war, North-East Ulster would consent to Home Rule without the initial period of exclusion. To reject those proposals, therefore, would mean that in say, 1918, Home Rule would still be the great unknown. Those who really believe in it (and I hope the number is large) will feel that some experience of its actual working will do far more to disarm the hostility of the North than safeguards, compromises, and promises. It is said the scheme involves the establishment of Home Rule in the excluded area which that area would not lightly surrender. Whatever may be the truth of this as regards a permanent scheme of exclusion, it is certainly not true as regards a transitional period, from now until the summoning of a great Imperial conference to consider the future Government of the Empire. No new judicial arrangement will be required. Existing judges would hold assizes in the Northern counties and hear appeals from Belfast and elsewhere as at present, and the existing County Court Judges for the excluded counties, and resident magistrates stationed therein, would carry on as at present. The R.I.C. would continue to act, for in any case under the Home Rule Act that force will be controlled by the Lord Lieutenant; the National Board of Education

would be continued in the North by a preservation of the existing denominational system, and the Catholic schools in the excluded area would continue under the control of their own managers. The practical effect of the rejection means the break-up of the Light Party and arrived to the control of the contr

The practical effect of the rejection means the break-up of the Irish Party, and, owing to the fissiparous nature of Irish politics, the emergence of groups would be less powerful at the "After the War Conference" than the present Party, and in the meantime it would encourage a recrudescence of secret societies and physical force parties, which would be deplorable from every point of view. I certainly feel very strongly, both as a Catholic and Nationalist and a devoted lover of Ireland, that at this critical period in the history of our country Catholics and Nationalists should stand firmly together (even if Catholics and Protestants cannot agree to do so), and that no jealousies or dissension (which have formerly prevailed) should be tolerated amongst themselves, but that they should all support those leaders who have shown themselves not only lovers of their country, but wise and far-seeing statesmen, who can look beyond the limits of party politics, and see what is good not only for Ireland, but for the whole Irish race scattered in many parts of the world, and whose line of action should eventually make this country what it was in olden days, a nation of saints and scholars, esteemed and looked up to by the whole world.—Yours, etc.

HENRY BELLINGHAM, Bart ..

H.M. Lieutenant, Co. Louth.

MR. O'KANE ON THE HOME RULE SETTLEMENT.

POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION BY ULSTER NATIONALISTS.

To the Editor of the "Freeman's Journai."

Dear Sir,—The Home Rule question has long since passed out of the region of argument. The whole world admits the right of each nation to control its own internal affairs. Difficulties peculiar to each country often retard legislative freedom. Ireland is the only nation in which religious animosities and religious distrust are the main obstacles to the nation's freedom.

I have over thirty years' experience of public life in Ulster. I have been surrounded by Orangemen all my life. I know their views intimately. Not a few of them are my best friends, and a good number are my customers. They are kindly Irish of the Irish, and are proud to proclaim themselves Irishmen. Many of them admit that Home Rule would benefit Ireland. They have only one objection, and it is their sole argument—Fear of Rome. They are as certain as the rise of to-morrow's sun that an Irish Parliament, if established, will proceed to the persecution of the Protestant minority. If you force these men against their will into an Irish Parliament you will arouse all the forces of religious

They will fight to the death against you, for they will be fighting, according to their lights, a holy fight for civil and religious liberty won at the Boyne. Their leaders have taught them this lesson again and again. Dupes they may be, but they are sincere, and they will, like the true fanatics, die, and die gladly, in resistance to Rome. It will, therefore, be madness to attempt to coerce them. Centuries of religious distrust have to be overcome. One ounce of political experience will do more with an Orangeman than tons of platitudes, and when he sees an Irish Parliament in being, and notes its progress and its National spirit, its beneficent influence on the nation, which is his nation as well as ours, he will begin to think nationally, and he will see an Irish Parliament is not what he thought it would be. He will cease to shiver on the banks of the Boyne under the influence of phantasies about the Pope and the machinations of Rome, which have been so assiduously instilled into his mind even from his boyhood's days by designing men—cleric as well as lay. He will, in fact, begin to trust his Catholic fellow countryman, and in a short time he will be found working shoulder to shoulder with him for Ireland. One year of an Irish Parliament will do more to remove Ulster's fears than a decade of agitation or coercion.

This is not a pious hope. It has been tested, and it has rung true in the past. Mr. Devlin, M.P., by his whole-souled advocacy of labour, his intrepid fight against sweating, his sincere sympathy with the lot of the working man touched the hearts of the Orange working men of West Belfast. They saw in him a true champion of their cause, and they rallied round him in the West, not once nor twice, and by their votes returned him as a Nationalist M.P. for West Belfast. What Joseph Devlin did by patience and kindness in the city which is the heart's blood of Orangeism can be done by us to-day for Ulster and for Ireland.

With all the earnestness I can command, and with a life-long experience at my back, and an intimate knowledge of my Orange fellow-countrymen, living amongst them all my life. I solemnly declare that they offer, in the majority of cases, a promising soil it reated patiently and convincingly. Once they recognise that an Irish Parliament is not, as they think it will be, a tool of Rome, their opposition will vanish. You can only prove this to them by an experience of it.

About ten years ago a few heroic men in the Orange ranks led a crusade against the old shibboleths, and taught the Orangemen to think of Ireland as their nation as well as ours; that they could cherish the deeds done by the apprentice boys of Derry, and remember the heroism at Enniskillen and the victory of the Boyne, and, above all, cherish and the victory of the Boyne, and, above all, cherish and the victory of the Boyne, and, above all, cherish and the victory of the Boyne, and, above all, cherish and the victory of the Boyne, and till love Treland and work for her advancement and her legislative freedom within the Empire. A good many of these leaders were my personal friends. The teachings spread. The Independent Order of Orangemen was established, and on several Twelfths of July they came to this district. The tunes by the bands were no longer "Kick the Pope," "The Boyne Water." etc., but, what?—"The Minstrel Boy," "Let Erin Remember," and "The Irishman." The coal mines were opened here shortly afterwards, and the Hibernian band and the Orange band attended and played together and separated cheering for one another.

Treat these men and their less enlightened brethren with sweet reasonableless and prudence, and in a short year or two all will be well. But coerce them and all the hellish passions of religious fanaticism will be aroused, and the horrors of Dublin will be nothing to those of North-East Ulster. Our very efforts to compel them to come in will convince them of our persecuting intentions. You cannot overcome the religious distrust of centuries by a stroke of the pen, or by the passing of resolutions. And we are only asked to wait during the continuance of the war for an Ireland united, and to use our best efforts in that interval with the powerful aid of our own Parliament (drawing all things in Ireland to it) to accomplish our National ideal. North-East Ulster will then be a willing unit. Coerce it and it will remain a thorn in Ireland's side for centuries to come. But can we coerce it? Will resolutions heroically declining to yield even an inch of Irish soil do it? Will England coerce it for us, and can we expect such an undertaking to be assumed during the war?

The whole case can be put thus:-

If Ireland refuses-

- (1) We shall remain under a Coalition Government and probably military law during the war.
- (2) The wild spirit of unrest, consequent on the Dublin executions, etc., will increase, and it is bound to be a source of peril to Ireland and her hopes, and will afford an argument for the continuance of military rule.
- (3) At the end of the war our position will be worse than now. The Ulster question will be more formidable. Britain will not coerce Ulster (the Protestant feeling of England won't permit it), and we shall have lost all opportunity of inducing Ulster to agree. A Tory Party, probably, may be in power, and the recent rebellion will be an excuse for a repeal of the Home Rule Act.

If Ireland agrees-

- (1) We at once put Home Rule into being for four-fifths of Ireland, and on such a basis as will demonstrate to Ulster its benefit, and be an attraction to the counties excluded to come in.
- (2) The existence of the Irish Parliament makes repeal of the Act impossible for ever.
- (3) We shall have obtained definite pledges to reconsider a larger scheme at end of war, which shall embrace the thirty-two counties. The jury will be increased by our friends the Colonial representatives, and we shall speak by our National Parliament.
- (4) We shall possess a powerful means of exacting good financial treatment, which shall not be in our hands if this chance is lost.

Failing this, what policy is suggested which can obtain for us at once Home Rule for all Ireland and which shall overcome the Orange opposition and produce peace? It has yet to be even outlined. We have plenty of critics. Let us have one producer.

JOSEPH P. O'KANE.

ULSTER NATIONALIST CONFERENCE.

HELD IN ST. MARY'S HALL, BELFAST.

ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION OF IRISH LEADERS.

FULL DEBATE AND OPEN VOTING.

THE RESULT,

ANALYSIS OF VOTING.

THE OFFICIAL REPORT.

The result of the Conference held at Belfast on June 23rd was:—

For Acceptance	of Ho	me Rule	Proposals	 475
Against		•••		 265
Majority	for			210

By a free and open vote in a Conference exhaustively representative of the clergy, public bodies, and National associations within their confines the six Ulster counties of Antrim, Down, Derry, Armagh, Tyrone, and Fermanagh decided by a preponderating majority to accept the Lloyd George proposals for a temporary and provisional settlement of the Irish diffi-The Conference assembled on Friday, 23rd June, culty. in St. Mary's Hall, Belfast, at twelve o'clock, but long before that hour the hall and its vicinity bore testimony to the immense interest which the proceedings of the day represented for Ulster and for Ireland. It is no exaggeration to state that since the inception of the constitutional movement no more fateful issue has been presented to a Naionalist assemblage in the Northern capital. This conviction was fully shared in and understood by every delegate to the Conference, and it likewise tempered the feeling of the very large assemblage which waited patiently in Bank Street and the vicinity of the hall for hours keenly anxious as to the outcome of the deliberations. There is no doubt whatever that the best and staunchest Nationalists of the counties concerned mustered in the Conference. clerical and lay. The names comprised in the 800 or over which

composed the gathering included every prominent man who has won the support and confidence of the mass of Northern Home Rule opinion. There were many veterans in the fight, and the ranks of the clergy included several who have long been trusted advisers and leaders of their people. Bank Street, leading to St. Mary's Hall, was thronged from wall to wall before eleven o'clock.

LEADERS' WELCOME.

At a quarter to twelve, when Mr. Devlin, M.P., accompanied by the Very Rev. Canon Quinn, P.P., Camlough, and the Very Rev. Canon M'Cartan, P.P., Donaghmore, motored to the hall, it was only with the greatest difficulty that the police were able to make way for the vehicle. Mr. Devlin and the party, on alighting, received a most cordial ovation. A few minutes afterwards Mr. Redmond, Mr. Dillon, and Father M'Cotter, P.P., Antrim, arrived in a motor, and they also were made the recipients of a great popular welcome. All this time the stream of delegates was unceasing, and it was particularly noticeable that the clergy exercised their right of representation practically to the full.

The arrangements for the admission of the delegates were of the most thorough and impartial character. In the vestibule of the hall were six tables, over each of which was shown a card indicating the name of a county and diocese. Two scrutineers at each table examined the credentials of the delegates as they passed through, and duly accredited representatives had not the slightest difficulty in gaining admission, and no hitch or delay of any kind

occurred.

CONFERENCE OPENS.

Fairly well up to time Mr. Redmond, who presided, called the Conference to order and commenced his address. He received a welcome which rang out heartily to the expectant crowd thronging Bank Street and overflowing into Royal Avenue. One could judge the close of his speech, which occupied about three-quarters of an hour, by a great volume of cheering, which was even more hearty than that which marked his rising to open his remarks. Mr. Dillon and Mr. Devlin were greeted with scarcely less spontaneous enthusiasm.

TAKING THE VOTE.

The discussion, which was full and free, had concluded about four, and the taking of the vote of the Conference proceeded. It was an open vote, the name of each delegate being called from the platform and the delegate responding by standing up and declaring his acceptance or otherwise of the one resolution proposed. This proceeding was necessarily prolonged, and it was about half-past five before the result of the division became known. The news that the proposals had been accepted by a decisive majority was hailed with ringing cheers by the crowd in the streets, and their delightful satisfaction at the outcome was further evidenced in the series of splendid ovations which they extended to the leaders and the principal clergy when they were leaving the hall. The demonstrations were a fitting conclusion to the proceedings of a memorable day in the annals of Ulster nationality.

VOTING ANALYSED.

Of the 740 votes recorded an approximate analysis is as follows:—

ARMAGH.									
For the	propo	sals					62		
Against							32		
	BE	LFAS	TANI	ANT	RIM.				
For							129		
Against							7		
	DERRY.								
For							67		
Against							60		
			DOW	NI					
For							4.47		
				• • •	• • •		117		
Against	• • •					• • •	13		
FERMANAGH.									
For							36		
Against							58		
TYRONE.									
For							64		
Against							85		

The proceedings were most exemplary in the order and good spirit which prevailed.

THE OFFICIAL REPORT.

The following is the official report:-

A Conference of the representative Nationalists of the six counties principally affected by the proposals of Mr. Lloyd George in connection with the government of Ireland was held on Friday, June 23rd, in St. Mary's Hall. Belfast, at twelve o'clock noon.

The following was the basis of representation:-

- 1.—One priest in each parish in the six counties.
- 2.—Nationalist members of Parliament in the six counties.
- 3.—The officers of the Divisional Executives of the United Irish League for each constituency in the six counties.
- 4.—The County Officers of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the District Officers of the Irish National Foresters in the six counties.
- $5.{-}All$ Nationalist members of elected public Boards in the six counties.
- 6.—For the cities of Belfast and Derry five additional members elected by the Executives of the United Irish League, Irish National Foresters, and Ancient Order of Hibernians.

THE DELEGATES.

The following is an analysis of attendance:-

The following is an analysis of the numbers of each class of delegates entitled to representation on the above basis:—

nr 1 c D.	liamont					7
Members of Pa						
Priests (1 from				168		
U.I.L. Division	al Execut	ive	(some	of	whom	
priests)						120
A.O.H. County	Boards					40
I.N. Foresters						40
Public Bodies						702
Total						1.077

THE ATTENDANCE.

Belfast, County Antrim, and Diocese of Down and Connor—Member of Parliament, 1; priests, 47; Executive U.I.L., 29; Co. Board, A.O.H., 13; I.N.F., 11; public bodies, 46. Total, 147.

Co. Armagh and Archdiocese of Armagh—Member of Parliament, 1; priests, 29; Executive U.I.L., 10; Co. Board A.O.H., 4; Irish National Foresters, 4; public bodies, 65. Total, 113.

Co. Down and Diocese of Dromore—Members of Parliament, 2; priests, 11; Executives U.I.L., 20; Co. Board A.O.H., 5; Irish National Foresters, 5; public bodies, 88. Total, 131.

Derry City, Co. Derry and Diocese of Derry—Priests, 26; Executive U.I.L., 16; Co. Board A.O.H., 9; Irish National Foresters, 15; public bodies, 66. Total, 132.

Co. Tyrone and Diocese of Clogher—Members of Parliament, 1; priests, 13; Executive U.I.L., 16; Co. Board A.O.H., 3; Irish National Foresters, 4; public bodies, 132. Total, 169.

Co. Fermanagh and Diocese of Kilmore—Members of Parliament, 1: priests, 4; Executive U.İ.L., 6; Co. Board A.O.H., 1; Irish National Foresters, 5; public bodies, 67. Total, 84.

TOTAL.

Antrim and Diocese of Down and Connor	 147
Armagh and Archdiocese of Armagh	 113
Down and Diocese of Dromore	 131
Derry and Diocese of Derry	 132
Tyrone and Diocese of Clogher	 169
Fermanagh and Diocese of Kilmore	 84
Grand Total	 776

THE RESOLUTION.

Mr. John Redmond, M.P., Chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party, presided.

The Chairman having addressed the Conference,

Mr. Patrick Dempsey, J.P., T.C., Belfast, proposed the following resolution:—

"That this Conference of representatives from the Counties of Antrim, Down, Derry, Armagh, Tyrone, and Fermanagh, and from the Cities of Belfast and Derry, having considered the proposals of Mr. Lloyd George for the temporary and provisional settlement of the Irish difficulty, is of opinion that they should be accepted, and that in view of all the circumstances of the present situation in Ireland they offer the best means of carrying on the fight for a united, self-governing Ireland."

The resolution was seconded by the Very Rev. Canon M'Cartan, P.P., V.F., Donaghmore, Co. Tyrone.

The resolution was supported by the Very Rev. Canon Quinn, P.P., V.F., Camlough, Co. Armagh, National Director U.I.L.; the Very Rev. John Nolan, P.P., V.F., Moneyglass, Toomebridge, Co. Antrim; Mr. John Dillon, M.P.; and Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P.

The resolution was opposed by Mr. F. J. O'Connor, solicitor, Omagh; Mr. George Murnaghan, ex-M.P., Omagh; Mr. T. M'Laughlin, U.D.C., Armagh; the Very Rev. W. B. M'Feeley, P.P., B.D., Glendermot, Waterside, Derry; the Very Rev. Canon Keowa, P.P., V.G., Enniskillen; Mr. John M'Glone, National Director U.I.L., Mid-Armagh; and Alderman James M'Carron, Derry City.

THE VOTING.

No amendment was moved to the resolution, and at the close of the discussion a division was taken by open vote, the name of every delegate being read out from the chair and the delegate rising in his place and declaring his vote "Yes" or "No." Messrs. Daniel M. Cann, J.P., Belfast, and T. J. S. Harbison, solicitor Cookstown, were appointed scrutineers, and after the counting of the votes announced the result as follows:—

For the Re	solution 	1			 475 265
Majorit	y for t	he Re	solution	1	 210

The proceedings, which were characterised by great earnest-ness and entire good feeling throughout, then concluded.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS,

MEETING OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

A specially convened meeting of the National Committee was held at headquarters, 44 Parnell Square, Dublin, on Saturday, June 17th. Mr. J. C. Meredith, B.L., presided.

The following members were also present:—Col. Moore, C.B., Inspector-General; Col. Crean, Col. Phillips, Major Cullen, Capt. Nugent, Capt. Walsh, Capt. Coffey, Col. Donegan (Cork), Capt. Page, Messrs. John Gore, P. Rooney, J. J. M'Carthy (Meath), R. Burke (Tyrone), A. G. O'Loughlin (Louth), J. P. Gaynor, B.L.; S. J. Hand, Dr. T. J. Madden, Capt. Lenehan, and Messrs. J. T. Donovan, M.P., and L. T. Kettle, hon. secretaries.

The Committee having taken into consideration the present position of Home Rule, the following resolutions were passed, on the proposition of Col. Moore, seconded by Mr. O'Loughlin:—

- 1. "That as the proposals before the country will settle once for all the establishment of a Parliament in Dublin, they should be considered in all its phases with the greatest gravity."
- 2. "That the Irish National Volunteers cannot consider any settlement for the permanent exclusion of any part of Ireland."
- 3. "That the temporary exclusion of counties with Nationalist majorities, such as Tyrone, Fermanagh, as well as Derry City, is most unfair and unreasonable."
- 4. "That we, having carefully considered the proposals for a settlement to last only during the continuance of the war, and having carefully balanced the advantages and disadvantages of their adoption, consider that the establishment of a Parliament in Dublin, even though it be for a part of the country, will place Nationalist Ireland in a stronger position than if the negotiations with Ulster had to begin afresh after the war."
- 5. 'That we pledge ourselves to our Nationalist fellow-countrymen in Ulster to accept no final settlement at the conference after the war that does not involve the establishment of a Parliament for the whole of Ireland.'
- 6. "That we have every confidence that if we act with wisdom and caution we shall be able to effect a settlement at the end of the war, which will not only bring all Ireland under one Government, but will improve the financial arrangements of the Home Rule Act."
- 7. "That we consider the question of an immediate accentance of the proposals before us to be intimately connected with a general amnesty for all Nationalists imprisoned on account of the late rising; and, as there can be no peace in Ireland while they are suffering, we accept this offer on condition of their release."

HOME RULE NEGOTIATIONS.

PROPOSALS ACCEPTED BY LARGE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTORY.

ONLY TWO DISSENTIENTS.

A specially convened meeting of the National Directory was held at 39 Upper O'Connell Street, Dublin, on July 3rd, at 2 o'clock p.m.

Mr. John E. Redmond, M.P., presided. The following members were present:-Very Rev. John M'Cartan, P.P., V.F., County Antrim; Andrew Donnelly, North Armagh; Very Rev. Canon Quinn, P.P., V.F., South Armagh; John Diffin, P.L.G., West Belfast; John Conlon, Carlow; Daniel Reilly, West Cavan; T. M. Farrelly, East Cavan; Michael Mescal, J.P., West Clare; John J. Horgan, Cork City; Con. O'Callaghan, J.P., Mid-Cork; Joseph Davison, South Derry; James M'Daid, North Donegal; Very Rev. Canon MacFadden, P.P., V.F., West Donegal; Rev. J. M'Cafferty, Adm., East Donegal; Michael Dunne, J.P., North Dublin; John Fogarty, J.P., College Green, Dublin; Patrick Crumley, M.P., North Fermanagh; Rev. T. O'Doherty, P.P., South Fermanagh; James Cosgrove, M.P., East Galway; W. J. Duffy, M.P., South Galway; M. J. Flavin, M.P., North Kerry; Thomas O'Donnell, M.P., West Kerry; John Healy, J.P., Co.C., North Kildare; Rev. James Brennan, P.P., South Kilkenny; Michael Reddy, M.P., Birr, King's County; Alderman M. Joyce, M.P., Limerick City; D. J. Madden, West Limerick, Thomas Duffy, South Longford; Michael O'Meara, J.P., North Louth; N. T. Murphy, South Louth; P. W. Durkan, North Mayo; Very Rev. Canon MacDonnell, P.P., East Mayo; Patrick Boyle, North Meath; Thomas MacIvor, South Meath; Peter Coyle, South Menth, T. Murphy, South Louth; R. W. P., Ossory, Queen's Co.; P. J. Meehan, M.P., Leix; Patrick Regan, North Roscommon; John Galvin, Co.C., South Roscommon; Alderman Jinks, Mayor of Sligo, North Sligo; John Kennedy, North Tipperary; John Cullinan, M.P., South Tipperary; Ed. Anglim, Co.C., East Tipperary; John Doris, J.P., East Tyrone; Dr. P. R. Dennehy, West Waterford; Michael Power, East Waterford; John P. Hayden, M.P., North Westmeath; Patrick W. Kenna, J.P., South Westmeath; John Bolger J.P., North Westford; Edmund Doyle, South Westford; Patrick White, M.P.; John Muldoon, M.P.; William Coffey; John Dillon, M.P.; Joseph Devlin, M.P.; Professor T. M. Kettle, Richard M'Ghee, M.P.; J. G. Swift MacNeil, K.C., M.P.; Thomas J. Condon, M.P.; Captain Stephen Gwynn, M.P.; John T. Donovan, M.P.; John D. Nugent, M.P.; Thomas Scanlan, M.P.; Joseph Dolan, M.A.; John Fitzgibbon, M.P.; Richard Hazleton, M.P.; Captain A. J. C. Donelan, M.P.; Patrick O'Brien, M.P.; Joseph Dolan, M.P.; John D. Nugent, M.P.; Richard Hazleton, M.P.; Captain A. J. C. Donelan, M.P.; Patrick O'Brien, M.P.; J. P. Boland, M.P.; Captain A. J. C. Donelan, M.P.; Patrick O'Brien, M.P.; John P. Boland, M.P.; Captain A. J. C. Donelan, M.P.; Patrick O'Brien, M.P.; J. P. Boland, M.P.; L. Patrick O'Brie South Fermanagh; James Cosgrove, M.P., East Galway; W. J.

Messages of apology for non-attendance were received from Right Rev. Monsignor M'Glynn, P.P., V.G., Donegal; Rev. W. J. Booth, P.P., South Tyrone; F. J. O'Connor, Mid-Tyrone; Very Rev. P. Soden, P.P., V.G., North Leitrim; D. L. O'Gorman, North-East Cork; E. Barry, South Cork; Thomas Cunniam, St. Patrick's Dublin; C. M. Russell, East Down.

The following resolution was proposed by Mr. J. J. Horgan, solicitor, Cork, seconded by Very Rev. Canon MacFadden, P.P., V.F., West Donegal:—

"That this meeting of the National Directory, representing the supreme National authority in Ireland, having carefully considered the proposals of Mr. Lloyd George for the temporary and provisional settlement of the Irish difficulty, is of opinion that the proposals should be accepted, because, under present circumstances, they offer the best means of carrying on the fight for a united, self-governed Ireland; and we desire to place on record that in coming to this conclusion we have been largely influenced by the wise and statesmanlike decision come to by the delegates at the Belfast Conference on the 23rd ultimo."

Captain Donelan, M.P.; Alderman Jinks, Mayor of Sligo; Mr. N. T. Murphy, South Louth; Mr. D. J. Madden, West Limerick, Professor T. M. Kettle; Mr. Michael Dunne, North Duplin; Mr. Edmund Doyle, South Wexford; Mr. Ed. Anglim, East Tipperary; Mr. Andrew Donnelly, North Armagh; Mr. Michael O'Meara, J.P., North Louth; Rev. James Brennan, P.P., South Kilkenny; and Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P., supported the resolution.

Rev. T. O'Doherty, P.P., South Fermanagh, and Mr. John Doris, J.P., East Tyrone, opposed the resolution, which was then put to the meeting and carried with two dissentients, Father O'Doherty and Mr. John Doris.

Mr. James M'Daid, North Donegal, proposed, and Mr. Joseph Dolan, M.A., seconded:—

"That we most emphatically protest against the prolonged detention in prison of hundreds of untried men against whom no charge has been formulated, and large numbers of whom took no part in the recent insurrection." Carried unanimously.

Rev. John M'Cafferty, Adm., East Donegal, proposed:-

"That we solemnly protest against the practice of treatin; the men who have been tried and condemned for political offences as common criminals, and demand that they be treated in accordance with the practice of civilised nations as political prisoners."

Seconded by Mr. John Dillon, M.P.; supported by Mr. John Cullinan, M.P., South Tipperary; Mr. John Doris, East Tyrone, and Professor T. M. Kettle, and carried unanimously.

THE ULSTER CONFERENCE, LETTER FROM VERY REV. CANON EUGENE MacMAHON, P.P.

To the Editor of the "Freeman's Journal."

Sunday, 9th July, 1916.

Dear Sir,—I received on Saturday morning a circular from Omagh, signed by F. J. O'Connor, George Murnaghan (jun.), and Alexander E. Donnelly, hon. secs, "pro tem, of ——,"? asking me to call a meeting of my parishioners after Mass on Sunday, 9th inst., "to protest against the imposition of the Lloyd George proposals which entailed the partition of Ireland, especially the exclusion of the counties of Fermanagh, Tyrone, and Derry City." I may say at the outset that I did nothing of the kind. Had I done so I know I would have disgusted the thinking people of the parish, and they are very numerous. I consider the action of these three gentlemen and any followers they may have to be

most ill-advised at this juncture.

The man in the street says that the decision at the Belfast Conference ought to be upheld, at least until we hear further from the announcement of the Prime Minister to be made to-morrow, and the action of the Irish Party thereon. It ought at this time to be unnecessary to remind at least some of the promoters of this ill-advised movement that majority rule ought now, as in the past, to hold the field. I know the feelings of the people of my own parish, and I am glad to be able to say that whatever differences of opinion they may have had before the Belfast Conference, the volume of opinion is substantially with the Irish Party at this moment. I want to remind some of the promoters of this new "venture," which can scarcely be called anything but factionist of the worst type (the word 'factionist' a word I have never used before either in a letter or in a public speech), that I am neither a pro-German nor a revolutionist that I am as much, or perhaps more, opposed to the exclusion of any part of Ireland, even temporarily, from Home Rule as these gentlemen, but, at the same time, I agree with the overwhelming majority of the thinking people of the country, and with the Irish Party led by Mr. Redmond, that the surest and best way to obtain Home Rule for All Ireland is along the lines of peace and good-will among all sections of the Irish people. Both sides are making sacrifices, when one takes into account the political antagonisms of a short time ago, and therefore throwing in any apple of discord and disregarding the advice of our wise and trusted leaders is, to my mind, both unwise and unpatriotic. The opponents of the Irish Party and its policy—it is not for me to question their motives—base their objections to the Lloyd George proposals on the ground that the six counties—Antrim, Down, Armagh, Tyrone, Fermanagh, and Derry—are to be for all time excluded from the operations of the Home Rule Act. It is unnecessary for me to

say that proposals are variable, and that it is only when competent authority pronounces on them that they take definite shape. On this point Mr. Redmond more than once during the debate at the Conference in Belfast distinctly stated that if in the negotiations leading up to the putting of Home Rule into operation any attempt from any responsible quarter would be made for the permanent exclusion of the six counties named he would smash the whole thing.

In the name, therefore, of common sense, common patriotism, and good-will among all sections of the Irish people, irrespective of class or religion, let us bury our little jealousies and little disappointments, and throw in our lot with the trusted leaders of the people, who have not been playing to the gallery in this latest phase of the Irish question, but have been doing their best, under most trying and difficult circumstances, for the unity and

prosperity of Ireland.

EUGENE CANON MACMAHON, P.P.

St. Mary's, Cleenish, Arney, Enniskillen.



"DON'T SPEAK TO THE MAN AT THE WHEEL."

To the Editor of the "Irish News."

Sir,—The man at the wheel is John Redmond. He is a commander under whom every true Irishman is content to sail, safe in the conviction that he has weathered many a storm and steered his bark amid shoals and quicksands that would have meant disaster to any less experienced pilot. He has already delivered many rich cargoes, and long since would have brought to port his valuable consignment of Home Rule; but meeting unexpectedly with a typhoon in the shape of the greatest war in history, and the Sinn Fein rebellion, his good ship has received a severe shock. It is, however, still seaworthy, and, with careful handling, we are assured that its gallant captain will shortly be able to land four-fifths of its cargo, having made arrangements for the remainder to follow as quickly as possible.

Figures of speech laid aside, Ireland is fortunate to have at the present crisis as her leader one who is in many respects the greatest statesman certainly in the three Kingdoms, probably in Europe. In dignity of manner, in calmness of judgment, in political sagacity, in clarity of expression, in old-world courtesy towards opponents, Mr. Redmond ranks high indeed amongst contemporary statesmen.

Anyone who is at all conversant with the world of politics as mirrored in the Continental Press, cannot fail to be impressed by the large space occupied in men's minds by the Irish leader. Statesmen of free and sovereign nations find it comparatively easy to acquire a great name. Their lot is cast in self-centred communities, and they are not lacking in support from rich and powerful backers. In Ireland it is quite the reverse. Mr. Redmond took over a faction-riven community, and by the exercise of almost superhuman industry and patience welded it into as near an approach to a united Ireland as its fissiparous nature would permit. For be it always remembered that the Clan system, which was the curse of Ireland in the olden days, survives in many of its most hateful qualities to the present age. In those days clan interests and clan prejudices obscured the vision of Ireland a nation; in modern times the faction endeavours to emulate the often sinister work of the clan. Furthermore, it would be idle for us to forget that, stripped of verbiage, the task Mr. Redmond is engaged in is to press the claims of some three millions and a half of Catholic Irishmen on the unwilling attention of a rich and powerful community of forty millions of Protestant Englishmen. "Hoc opus, hic labor est." Surely if any leader deserved the support and sympathy, and even the prayers, of a people it is Mr. John Redmond.

Great play has recently been made with lofty and sentimental appeals to Irish History by all sorts and conditions of men, including highly-placed ecclesiastics—whom I deeply revere. If I were ignorant of Irish History, and if I were living in dreamland, it is probable that these highly-seasoned appeals would make an impression. But it so happens that I have made a deep study of Irish History, and that I am living in a very real world; thus I am compelled to confess that these emotional appeals leave me cold.

When one venerable ecclesiastic adjures us not to give up the grave of St. Patrick, I reply that it already is given up—the grave of the great saint is in Protestant soil and in Protestant hands. When another venerable ecclesiastic informs us that the Union left Ireland one and indivisible, I reply that History informs us that Ireland never was one and indivisible—in the sense, say, that France was one and indivisible under Richelieu; and when he furthermore tries to persuade us of the direful effects that would follow if the present temporary arrangement was made, I am forced to say that History informs us that among the supporters of the Act of Union were many Irish Catholic Bishops. They, no doubt, were perfectly bona-fide, and thought religion might be benefited by the Union; so when a venerable ecclesiastic of the present day uses the prestige attached to his high position against the temporary proposals, and engages in a letter-writing campaign he, no doubt, is bona-fide. But I cannot get away from the thought that if learned and able Bishops were and venerable Bishops are right now?

One of the most distressing features of the present controversy is, to my mind, the ease with which the minority against the proposals at the recent Ulster Conference repudiate the decision in which they took part. They came to a Conference whose basis was a matter of arrangement between Mr. John Redmond and the Bishops of Ulster; they spoke and voted freely; everything was in proper order. Scrutineers, having the confidence of their respective sides, noted and summed up the votes, which were open. Surely our political education is not advanced as far as we thought when the party which is fairly beaten lightly casts aside its obligation to abide by majority rule and begins agitation afresh? There must be some finality in these things. We have not heard of the Unionists who were dissatisfied at the Ulster Unionist Conference repudiating the decision of that meeting.

Two Churchmen, living at times far apart and belonging to rival Churches, but having an unrivalled knowledge of their subject, have left us their estimate of Irishmen. Their names are Rinuccini and Swift. The Papal Nuntio to the Confederation of Kilkenny, having vainly endeavoured to unite rival Irish factions and thus enable them to make Ireland a free and sovereign nation at the only epoch of history since the Norman Conquest, when such was possible, escaped with his life from Galway. As he left behind him the green shores of Erin he ejaculated: "O gens stultorum," "Nation of fools!" Swift when dving left his fortune to found a lunatic asylum, and thus "showed by one satiric touch no nation needed it so much." It must be admitted that Swift, with splendid impartiality, meant Protestant and Catholic Irishmen alike to be beneficiaries of his grim legacy. Is the verdict of the Nurtio and the Dean again to be verified? The ship of Home Rule is in stormy waters, but she is seaworthy and watertight. Above all, she has a capital Pilot. There is only one warning required: "Don't speak to the man at the wheel."—I am, yours faithfully,

T. M'COTTER, P.P.

St. Comgall's Presbytery, Antrim, 19th July, 1916.

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